

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

LOCAL AUTHORITIES MAJOR GROUP CSD-14

It is indeed an honour to be at the United Nations, speaking on behalf of local governments worldwide.

My name is Deputy Mayor Emilio D'Alessio, and I am an elected official from the City of Ancona, Italy. I am also on the Executive Committee of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability.

Local governments are key stakeholders in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the achievement of the Millenium Development Goals, and are implementing policies, programmes and projects that are achieving these global outcomes.

Many local governments own and operate power plants and make decisions on energy sources. Local governments own and operate buildings, vehicles and facilities such as street lighting, waste management systems, and water supply and treatment. They also make decisions on transportation and transit systems. All of these responsibilities influence energy use, industrial development, air quality and climate change action, and public procurement.

In the area of climate protection, ICLEI is working with a network of 675 local governments worldwide that have established reduction targets and are implementing reduction policies. This is significant - taken together, these local governments account for about 15 per cent of global atmospheric carbon emissions.

In North America alone, the 300 local governments that are adopting climate change reduction policies and programs are collectively reducing annual greenhouse gas emissions by 32 million tons. In terms of population, that represents 87 million people that are acting to achieve sustainable development.

Local governments benefit from networks that enable the exchange of information, provide access to tools and enhance their activities towards climate change mitigation. Cities around the world are using the tools and knowledge gained through such networks to contribute directly to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, the political will to act is there, and growing at the local government level.

At COP11, local governments presented a Municipal Leaders' Declaration on Climate Change, stressing the need for collective action on climate change, and for providing local governments greater access to the decision-making process.

ICLEI recently established the World Mayors Council on Climate Change, launched by the Mayor of Kyoto, birthplace of the Kyoto Protocol. The Council was established to garner global political leadership on climate change at the local level. This Council is striving to politically influence national and international policies on climate change.

Despite these commitments to energy efficiency, clean energy and air quality improvements, local governments continue to face obstacles that impede their progress.

National energy policies often do not allow for decentralized energy systems, and frequently subsidize polluting energy sources.

Infrastructure funding, when available, is often too limited to incorporate long-term sustainable development goals.

Local governments should be given more opportunity, and more autonomy, to engage in the Kyoto Mechanisms.

The environmental and economic burden of the automobile is felt at the local government level. Studies have found that motor vehicle revenues cover less than half of the cost incurred by local governments to provide the infrastructure, maintenance and services.

The worlds cities continue to stress the importance of cooperation and mutual support in the achievement of climate change mitigation.

In the words of Mayor Tremblay of Montreal, Canada, when he addressed the 11th session of the Conference of the Parties, “local governments are having an impact. Please support us, instead of impeding us.”

Thank you.